



North Shore Community College Civic Action Plan 2017-2021



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North Shore Community College

Vision/Mission

North Shore Community College (NSCC) has a long history of civic engagement that has garnered both regional and national recognition. NSCC was a Carnegie Classified Institution in 2010 (up for reclassification in 2020) and has had a consistent presence on the President's Higher Education Honor Roll since 2006. The NSCC Mission statement calls for our campus community to inspire students to become engaged citizens. In addition, a value statement of NSCC states the following about global citizenship:

We are dedicated to empowering students to become lifelong learners and engaged citizens, to understanding the global landscape, and to equipping them for transformative careers.

The following value statement on Social Responsibility and Justice outlines the College's commitment to its local community:

We are committed to developing productive, collaborative relationships within the college and among our various constituencies so that we may serve to improve the quality of lives in the North Shore communities

Most importantly, within the Strategic Plan (2017-2021) section focusing on Academics it calls for by 2021 that student completion of courses will increase by 5 percentage points through challenging programs of study, innovative teaching practices, flexible delivery systems, engaging co-curricular activities, and expanding experiential learning opportunities. The following strategy is mentioned to achieve this:

"Expand Service-Learning Course offerings and increase the numbers of students participating in service-learning and civic focused co-curricular activities."

With these statements as a foundation, the Civic Action Plan Committee would like to focus on the following commitments:

1. We empower our students for lives of engaged citizenship in mutually respectful partnerships in pursuit of a just, equitable, and sustainable future for communities beyond the campus – nearby and around the world.
2. We embrace our responsibilities as place-based institutions, contributing to the health and strength of our communities – economically, socially, environmentally, educationally, and politically.

Institutional Baseline

The Civic Learning Committee (see description below for details) reviewed key areas related to the college's commitment to Civic Engagement using Barbara Holland's rubric "Levels of Commitment to Community Engagement." (See Appendix A) to create an institutional baseline. The results of this discussion are described below.

The **mission** of NSCC, was identified as having a clear part of our academic agenda. It was rated as "highly relevant" but not "fully integrated." It is clear from the above discussion of mission and values that North Shore considers educating civically engaged students a priority, but it falls short of being a "defining characteristic."

NSCC **leadership** has a vested interest in and support for specific short-term community projects; as well as engagement as part of learning. There is a level of broad commitment to a sustained engagement agenda with ongoing funding support and community input. Leadership for civic engagement fell at a baseline of somewhere between it being of high relevance and fully integrated.

NSCC has the support of key individuals on campus who share a passion for civic engagement, including the President, Dr. Patricia Gentile, the VP of Academic Affairs, Dr. Karen Hynick as well as the VP of Student Affairs, Dr. Jermaine Williams, as well as the entire senior leadership. There is a top down and bottom up approach to advancing civic engagement on campus, bringing together administrators, staff, faculty, students, and community partners to advance this work. Administrators support civic engagement thru communicating initiatives in their dialogue on campus and in the community, as well as approving institutional budgetary support. Staff (Director of Student Engagement, Senior Specialist in Learner Effectiveness and Civic Engagement, Senior Coordinator of Student Engagement, and Graduate Fellow in Service-Learning) work in the middle level with direct interface with students and faculty. Faculty and students take on leadership roles as well. All levels work collaboratively in the Civic-Learning Committee. There are other examples of leadership working collaboratively to advance civic engagement. For example, stakeholders across campus contributed the following to our most recent strategic plan:

- **Goal One of Strategic Plan:** "North Shore Community College will foster engaging, outcomes-oriented learning through proactively establishing clear pathways for students to achieve their academic goals, fulfill their intellectual and personal potential, prepare for current and emerging careers, and *serve as active citizens in their communities*.
- **Goal Two of Strategic Plan:** "North Shore Community College will cultivate and strengthen relations with industry, business, government agencies, community organizations, K-12 schools, colleges and universities, and alumni to define and achieve mutually beneficial goals that enhance student access, success, and state workforce needs.

Promotion, Tenure, and Hiring was described to be of medium relevance to the College. Service-learning faculty get letters in their personnel files but it is unclear if this contributes to their promotion and tenure. No language exists in job postings identifying civic engagement as a desired competency.

The **Organization Structure and Funding** was described as being somewhere between having a place of high relevance and fully integrated. There are separate centers (service-learning office in CTLI, Student Engagement Office, CommUniverCity) to advance civic engagement which are supported by funding. The Civic-Learning Committee bridges some of these activities. The collaboration of these three entities is a “work in progress.” The infrastructure could be strengthened to support widespread student/faculty participation and the corresponding partnerships. Strengthening the Civic-Learning Committee is included among action items.

Student Involvement and Curriculum was described as fully integrated. Service-learning and community-based learning is integrated across the curriculum and linked to learning goals.

Faculty Involvement is described as a level four and is fully integrated in that community based work is integrated across the curriculum and linked to learning goals. An area that could be strengthened is interdisciplinary service-learning. And it was noted that as faculty retire, recruiting new faculty will be a priority. Results from a recent survey indicated the following regarding faculty:

- Over 81% of respondents volunteer in the community
- Almost 50% of respondents serve on a nonprofit board
- 42% of respondents share their expertise with the community
- Over 15% of respondents advise a club that engages in community service

Community Involvement was rated of high relevance, not as something that was fully integrated because there is need for information and a more orchestrated interface with community partners among the various entities that comprise civic engagement. The community influences campus through active partnerships, participation in service-learning programs or specific grants. We fall short of the community being directly involved in defining, conducting and evaluating community-based teaching and sustained partnerships.

See section on “Community Baseline” below.

External Communications and Fundraising was difficult to rate using Holland’s rubric. However, the group determined that this was not fully integrated. We have not reached a point where engagement is integral to fundraising goals; joint grants/gifts with community; or base funding.

Curricular Civic Engagement (Service-learning Initiative)

Assessment and program evaluation is a standard part of service-learning activities. In 2012, the Service-Learning Program completed a comprehensive self-study, evaluating the three key stakeholders of faculty, students, and community partners. Out of this self-study came key action items which were implemented and led to both an expansion of service-learning participation as well as creating a deeper more meaningful experience for students through expanded reflection opportunities. Since 2014 when the Assessment Coordinator’s position was moved out of the then CTLA, assessment activities have decreased with the service-learning program. However students and community partners routinely complete satisfaction surveys. This information is communicated to faculty and other key stakeholders and is used to shape projects and strengthen relationships with community partners. See assessment of community partner relationship below.

A key best practice is professional development offerings designed to support current participation and facilitate expansion in service-learning. Professional development offerings are a part of Professional Development Days on campus, integrated into service-learning meetings and retreats, as well as taking place in the form of small group and one-on-one trainings. Similarly, students receive orientation and training to prepare themselves for their service-learning experience, as well as individual advising from service-learning staff.

Key recognition events take place each year. A separate award ceremony takes place to honor faculty, students, and community partners who have done exemplary work in service-learning. Each year faculty are honored for their years of service-learning involvement when they reach milestones of 5 years, 10 years, or 15 years. Student service-learning scholarship recipients are also honored. And finally, a community partner who is nominated by faculty receives the Community Partner of the Year Award. Additionally, Civic Engagement Ambassadors will be recognized for their contributions to the Service-Learning Program in the 2017 awards ceremony. This initiative was piloted Spring 2017 to engage students in the operation of the service-learning program.

Co-Curricular Civic Engagement

The Office of Student Engagement (formerly Student Life) has been in a state of transition in recent years but have been assisting with various community service projects and initiatives such as Hurricane Katrina house builds, Lynn Woods clean-ups, and multiple collection campaigns. The OSE has begun to increase focus on co-curricular programming events in which multiple offices and/or academic departments work to increase the learning opportunities of NSCC students outside the traditional classroom environment.

The Office of Student Engagement also oversees the campus student clubs and organizations. Through these, the OSE has had involved students participate in advocating local/regional/national concerns both on campus and off, coordinate many of the campus collection drives (i.e. food, clothing, supplies), participate in various small volunteer opportunities, and assist in campus focused leadership activities.

Data Related to Institutional Baseline

Data related to benchmarking against the commitments we have selected are largely based on participation rates in civic engagement as reported on the President's Higher Education Community Service

Honor Roll application of 2015. In this reporting roughly 2,500 students out of 10,000 full and part-time students participated in some sort of civic engagement during academic year 2014-2015. Of these 2,500 students, approximately 950 of them were involved in service-learning and 200 were engaged in co-curricular engagement. The remainder were participants in clinical and field placements with non-profit organizations primarily through the Health and Human Services Division. Part of our commitment will be to expand opportunities in terms of numbers, but also to do this in a way where students will reflect on these experiences and enhance their critical thinking skills.

We currently work with over 200 community partners. Our goal with community partners would be to strengthen existing partnerships to better align them with the nature of reciprocity described in the commitments above.

Community Baseline

The college has a strong commitment to the community as evidenced by the groundbreaking work done with the CommUniverCity. CommUniverCity at Lynn is an urban education-workforce development collaboration that will provide effective and affordable educational pathways from pre-school to graduate school and into the workforce. The essence of this initiative includes designing educational pathways and community partnerships with a “birth-to-career” emphasis.

The above initiatives (curricular and co-curricular engagement and the CommUniverCity at Lynn) engage with more than 200 community partners. Within the service-learning program, community partners are routinely surveyed on the effectiveness of the partnerships and the success of student involvement in their organizations. Surveys show a 90% positive feedback from community partners with the experience. In addition to end of semester surveys, scripted phone calls take place with student placements for service-learning primarily in an effort to provide feedback to faculty about student activity as well as for the service-

learning office to become aware of challenges. These phone conversations reveal high levels of satisfaction with the partnership with NSCC (85% positive). These surveys have identified areas of success, as well as areas of opportunity.

In addition to the above activities, in 2012 and 2015 in depth interviews of community partners took place. In 2012, the interviews provided important information about the parameters of the service involved at the community partners including accessibility, safety, and other logistics to pass on to students. There was a general satisfaction with the partnership and interest on the partner's side to grow involvement with the College.

The 2015 interviews were conducted by an external source, and provided in-depth information on areas of strength as well as areas where we could improve our relations with community partners. Community partners described how they would like to know more about the teaching and learning outcomes for the classes they are doing service-learning with, and to become more connected with the classroom experience of the students. Additionally, community partners wanted to know more what service-learning is all about, its history and its definition. Finally, community partners wanted to improve communication with all parties concerned with the service-learning experience. The greatest strength described was the positivity of the staff and students they interacted with. The students energized the non-profits they worked with.

There is not a complete understanding of the Community Baseline at NSCC. Assessing community-based need is an important action item in our Civic Action Plan.

Civic Action Plan

See attached file

Implementation: Change, Institutionalization, and Transformation

The discussion of Mission and Values as well as the Institutional and Community Baseline served as a foundation for our Civic Action Plan. The implementation of this Civic Action Plan will require a cultural shift at NSCC and the Civic-Learning Committee understands that this will be no easy task. The committee conducted a review of change literature as part of their discussion on the implementation process for this plan. The highlights of this literature will guide the civic-learning committee as they seek to carry out the action plan.

Because we are seeking a cultural shift where our civic engagement practices are fully integrated into NSCC, we seek second order change. Cuban (1988) describes how second order change, “introduces new goals, structures, and roles that transform familiar ways of doing things into new ways of solving persistent problems” (p.73). In essence our change needs to change values and beliefs. Kezar (2014) describes key indicators for second order change:

- Collaborative leadership
- Developing cross-departmental teams of working groups
- Drawing on and discussing external ideas
- Sponsoring faculty and staff development opportunities
- Preparing and giving public presentations
- Flexible visions
- Creating documents and concept papers (p. 69)

Scott (1995) in providing a clear definition of institutionalization, describe it as “the process by which a significant new structure or practice is incorporated into a system of existing structures and practices” (p. 398). In essence these structures and practices become integrated into the day-to-day functioning of the organization (Colbeck, 2002).

Eckal, Hill, and Green (1998) describe how transformational change should be deep and pervasive. Pervasiveness is key; meaning that civic engagement should not be taking place in isolated pockets but rather “refers to the extent to which the change is far-reaching in the institution” (Eckal, Hill, & Green, p. 4).

Saltmarsh, Janke, and Clayton (2015) describe how Melvin N. Johnson, Tennessee State University President suggested a third element contributed to transformational change with civic engagement. This element was “integration.” They describe how this integration is accomplished only by bringing together disparate elements of the agenda of the college campus including such things as the notion of access and success and the role of the underrepresented especially in the form of racial and ethnic diversity amongst students and faculty who participate in civic engagement. What this suggests is a change that is transformational should be deep, pervasive, and integrated and that it alters the culture of the institution.

Implementation: The Civic Learning Committee

The Civic Learning Committee is comprised of community partners, faculty, students, experts in the field, and administrators who are invested in the civic learning that takes place on campus. They meet regularly to advance civic learning as defined by the Massachusetts Board of Higher Education:

Civic learning means acquisition of the knowledge, the intellectual skills and the applied competencies that citizens need for informed and effective participation in civic and democratic life. It also means acquiring an understanding of the social values that underlie democratic structures and practices.

- The knowledge component of civic learning includes an understanding of the United States, including its history and governmental traditions, other world societies, and the relationship(s) between and among these cultures and nations.
- The intellectual skills component refers to qualities of mind necessary to engage effectively in civic activities.

- The applied competencies component refers to the practical skills and capacities needed to engage effectively in civic activities.
- The values component refers to understanding the social and political values that are associated with democratic and civic institutions.

Civic Learning Committee Mission

The NSCC Civic Learning Committee is dedicated to working with faculty in partnership with local, national, and global communities to engage students in civic-minded service-oriented experiences within curricula and co-curricular pathways for the purpose of enriching both community life and student learning outcomes.

Civic Learning Committee Goals

Committee Goals focus on the following key areas:

1. Academic Learning
2. Democratic Citizenship Learning
3. Diversity Learning
4. Leadership Learning

Team members bring diverse perspectives to this work and have been engaged in this work through their own personal experience. Community partners are from disparate geographic areas surrounding NSCC, students are former or current service-learning students, Administrators span Academic and Student Affairs, and faculty represent different academic programs/departments, many of whom have been involved in civic engagement on campus for many years. The Civic Learning Committee will be chiefly responsible for implementing the Civic Action Plan along with others as indicated.

Communicating the Civic Action Plan

After approval of the Civic Action Plan by Senior Leadership of the College it will be submitted to Campus Compact. Following this it will be made available to the College Community thru internal publications. Academic Deans will be approached to make discussion of the Civic Action Plan an agenda item for division meetings. Student Engagement will be invited to hold forums with students to discuss the civic action plan. In addition it will be forwarded to External and Public Relations for release to the public.

Thank you to the following individuals who contributed significantly to the Civic Action Plan:

Kate Adams, Graduate Fellow in Service-Learning
Linda Brantley, Executive Director, External and Public Relations
Brian Falter, Senior Special Programs Coordinator, Student Engagement
Cate Kaluzny, Senior Specialist Learner Effectiveness and Civic Engagement
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Suzanne Ryan (Northeast Arc)
Judith Marshall (Lynn Museum)
Jill Thornton, Dean of Strategic Partnerships
Shelley Watanabe, Student



Levels of Commitment to Community Engagement¹

	Level One: Low Relevance	Level Two: Medium Relevance	Level Three: High Relevance	Level Four: Full Integration
Mission	No mention or undefined rhetorical reference	Engagement is part of what we do as educated citizens	Engagement is an aspect of our academic agenda	Engagement is a central and defining characteristic
Leadership (Presidents, Vice Presidents, Deans, Chairs)	Engagement not mentioned as a priority; general rhetorical references to community or society	Expressions that describe institution as asset to community through economic impact	Interest in and support for specific, short-term community projects; engagement discussed as a part of learning and research	Broad leadership commitment to a sustained engagement agenda with ongoing funding support and community input
Promotion, Tenure, Hiring	Idea of engagement is confused with traditional view of service	Community engagement mentioned; volunteerism or consulting may be included in portfolio	Formal guidelines for defining, documenting & rewarding engaged teaching/research	Community-based research and teaching are valid criteria for hiring and reward
Organization Structure and Funding	No units focus on engagement or volunteerism	Units may exist to foster volunteerism/community service	Various separate centers and institutes are organized to support engagement; soft funding	Infrastructure exists (with base funding) to support partnerships and widespread faculty/student participation
Student Involvement & Curriculum	Part of extracurricular student life activities	Organized institutional support for volunteer activity and community leadership development	Opportunity for internships, practica, some service-learning courses	Service-learning and community-based learning integrated across curriculum; linked to learning goals
Faculty Involvement	Traditional service defined as campus duties; committees; little support for interdisciplinary work	Pro bono consulting; community volunteerism acknowledged	Tenured/senior faculty may pursue community-based research; some teach service-learning courses	Community-based research and learning intentionally integrated across disciplines; interdisciplinary work is supported
Community Involvement	Random, occasional, symbolic or limited individual or group involvement	Community representation on advisory boards for departments or schools	Community influences campus through active partnerships, participation in service-learning programs or specific grants	Community involved in defining, conducting and evaluating community-based research and teaching; sustained partnerships
External Communications and Fundraising	Community engagement not an emphasis	Stories of students or alumni as good citizens; partnerships are grant dependent	Emphasis on economic impact of institution; public role of centers, institutes, extension	Engagement is integral to fundraising goals; joint grants/gifts with community; base funding

¹ Barbara A. Holland, 2006. Adapted from Holland, *Michigan Journal of Community Service Learning*, Vol.4, Fall 1997, pp. 30-41. Retrieved from <http://www.henceonline.org/resources/institutional>

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